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ABSTRACT

Two community college presidents present their views of the worth of master planning. D. H. Smith, president of Brookdale Community College, describes the origin and development of the original master plan for Brookdale, the implementation of that plan, and the current proposed project to review the past and plan for the future through 1990. Smith's position is that every community college must have an ongoing master planning effort, since "a college without a plan may not have a future." Gordon C. Blank, president of Western Piedmont Community College, is more qualified in his praise of master plans. He notes that Western Piedmont's master plan was based on a number of faculty assumptions, being too specific in some respects, and too vague and global in others. In general, he feels that the master plan recorded expectations that the institution could not deliver. Since the alternative to master planning is, however, a reliance on chance to shape the institution, Blank concludes that only the careful formulation of a master plan can produce an institution "whose style is reactive to its milieu rather than dynamically proactive." (Author/NHM)

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MASTER PLANS: WERE THEY WORTH THE EFFORT?

A REPORT OF TWO CASE STUDIES.

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MASTER PLANS: ARE THEY WORTH THE EFFORT?

THE BROOKDALE EXPERIENCE AS SEEN BY THE SECOND PRESIDENT

Was Brookdale's Master Planning worth the effort? - "Unequivocally yes!" Master planning continues at Brookdale.

In this brief presentation I will attempt to describe the origin and development of the original master plan, the implementation of that plan, and the current proposed project to review the past and plan for the future through 1990.

The Origin of the Brookdale Master Plan:

The first President of Brookdale, Erv Harlacher, came from Oakland Community College where he was an original staff member. As you recall, Oakland had an unusually heavy commitment to master planning, particularly in the instructional program. There is a direct line from Foothills to Oakland to Brookdale, through Erv Harlacher.

When he was appointed to create a new college in Monmouth County, New Jersey Erv convinced the Board of Trustees that a year of master planning prior to the opening of the college was essential. The Board engaged General Learning Corporation and Tadlock Associates to develop a comprehensive master plan, working with the small staff then available, and the Board prior to the opening of the college in 1969. This master plan dealt with all aspects of a comprehensive community college. It particularly stressed certain concepts, the learner-centered instructional programs, the use of media, open space, and heavy involvement of the community in the college, and the college in the community.

When the initial faculty arrived in the summer of 1969 each member of the faculty and staff received the educational plan for the college. The initial faculty and staff were involved with the planners in the further development of the master plan and the completion of the facilities part of the master plan. Renovation of barns and farm buildings and contracts for the construction of new facilities, all guided by the master plan.

At the present time Brookdale is a direct implementation of the master plan. In short, the development of Brookdale from the first enrollment of students has been guided by the basic principles and plans established in the 1968-69 master plan.

I believe that the effort put into the development of the master plan was worth every nickle. I do not claim that each and every development has lived up to the expectations as presented in the master plan, but we have come very close and are still working to achieve the concepts as presented. Keep in mind that we are in our 7th year, and approximately one-third of our new construction became available in the fall of 1975.

As a second President my first task was to understand the concepts in the master plan; second, assess where the College was in terms of implementing those concepts; and then develop a process for continuing development of the College. However, it seemed basic to assess and evaluate Brookdale's present and future in terms of the development over the first seven years. This concern led to the development in 1975 of a Self-Study and Planning Project which studies Brookdale's present, defines itsfuture, and establishes plans for moving from the present to the future.

Approximately a year ago we made a survey of the community college master planning projects under way across the country. We visited Peralta, Los Angeles, and the large project at San Diego, the work at Kansas City, and others. From this we began developing what was first called the "Brookdale Educational Services Master Plan." You will note the concentration on Educational Services, since our facilities are almost complete and will provide for a significant period into the future. A preliminary proposal was drafted and reviewed by members of the Brookdale community. What has emerged is a joining of our self-study for reaccreditation and a planning project for the future which is now called the "Self-Study and Planning Project."

One output of Project Usher was a redefinition of our College statement on Philosophy, Mission and Goals. We are using the statement as a basis to the Self-Study and Planning Project.

This Project has five phases. The first phase deals with building a set of measurable objectives to implement and monitor our goals; second, assessing the present in terms of the original master plan, and where we are now; third, defining the future through 1990; fourth, identifying the gaps between our present and our future; and fifth, establishing a plan to reach a chosen future. The Steering Committee and Evaluation Committee for the Project have been appointed and begun their work. Their first task is to refine the proposed Project into its operational form.

You may ask, why 1990? The comment on campus is that since I turned 50 and plan to retire in 15 years, which just happens to be 1990, that this is the underlying reason we are looking that far ahead. There is some truth to this.

In summarizing my remarks, "Was the Brookdale Master Plan Worth the Effort?" My position is that each community college must have an ongoing, continuous master planning effort which attempts to define its future. The alternative is that the college without a plan may not have a future. Also, in a time when a variety of constituencies, including state and federal government are impinging on our mission, I believe the best defense is an offense. That offense is a well prepared, living plan.

D. H. Smith
3/15/76

By: Gordon C. Blank, President
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Forum 56, AACJC Convention
March 19, 1976, Washington, D. C.

Master Plans: Were They Worth The Effort?

(A Case Study Report)

In preparing for this presentation, my attention was immediately focused on the word "master" in the title of this forum. "Master" plans... how grandiose!, how impressive!, how noble! The process of master planning conjured up an image of elephants making love...that process is also grandiose, impressive, and noble. It occurs at a high level, the view from the top is exhilarating, it consumes tremendous energy, and it takes a long time to show results. With these noble images in mind, I then started to review our own master plan for Western Piedmont Community College, prepared a decade ago as we launched the great educational adventure of starting a new college. What a noble document! What far reaching consequences! How elegant! How profound! It was something to equal Darwin's Origin of the Species or Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity or perhaps the Declaration of Independence. As I began recapturing the heady days of academic glory in rereading the classic document that gave birth to our college, I was sidetracked by a copy of Robert Benchley which was on our living room coffee table. The inimitable Benchley was writing on the topic "What College Did To Me." I glanced down his list of "Things I Learned Freshman Year."

1. Charlemagne either died or was born or did something with the Holy Roman Empire in 800.

2. By placing one paper bag inside another paper bag you can carry home a milkshake in it.

3. There is a double "L" in the middle of parallel.

4. A tasty sandwich can be made by spreading peanut butter on raisin bread.

Benchley thus forced to mind my first observation in responding to the title of this forum of "Master Plans: Were They Worth the Effort." The profundity with which we sometimes develop master plans needs to be tempered with the realities we are likely to face in attempting to implement the plan. In assessing the master plan we developed for our college, I must sadly conclude that a large gap existed between what was dreamed and what was realized. The lesson is, by all means be a visionary, but don't go into master planning with Panglossian optimism that will be shattered in the forge of reality.

Having reached my first observation with its demoralizing implication, I decided to take another recreational reading detour in order to gain further perspective. I looked at William Cuppy's clever book How to Get from January to December. Cuppy, you may recall, authored other books which should be required reading for community college administrators...How to Tell your Friends from the Apes, How to Become Extinct, and The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody. Since I knew this forum was scheduled for today, I turned to his entry for March 19. It read as follows:

> David Livingstone, Scottish explorer and missionary, was born near Glasgow on March 19, 1813. When quite young he went to Africa and stayed there most of his time, making important discoveries in geography and hydrography and converting the heathen and living at such places as Mabotsa and Shupanga and Ujiji. That was what he wanted to do, but most people could not understand it. Most people think that if you do not live where they do, you are missing a lot. So Henry M. Stanley went to Africa to find Livingstone and bring him back to civilization, and he finally found him at Ujiji and said: "Doctor Livingstone, I presume?" Well, it turned out that Livingstone wasn't lost at all and that he wanted to stay there, which he did. This teaches that your chances of being let alone, even if you go to Ujiji, are pretty slim.

So it was that Cuppy provided me with a second observation that pertains to my assessment of our master planning effort. Your chances of being let alone to bring your plan to fruition, even if you develop a master plan for Ujiji Community College, are pretty slim. Your institutions and my institution are bound up inextricably with a complex intertwining of internal and external threads, all of which impinge on you at the center of the complex web of involvements and relationships. You will not be let alone in your efforts to implement the master plan. All of your constituencies will be pulling and tugging at you as you attempt the task of managing the unmanageable...state legislators, influential politicians, federal and state bureaucrats, your trustees, your state governing body, vested interest groups in your community, your own staff and faculty, and even those for whom the payoff of the master plan is all about--your students. Each segment of your constituency has a hand in what happens to your master plan. Another way of putting this is the notice I saw posted in the office of a beleaguered colleague. It said:

> NOTICE: The objective of all community college educators should be to analyze thoroughly all situations, anticipate

> all problems prior to their occurrence, have answers for these problems, and most swiftly to solve these problems when called upon...however, when you're up to your ears in alligators, it's difficult to remind yourself that your initial objective was to drain the swamp.

The lesson from this is to develop objectives that take into account the many cross currents that the future will likely hold for your institution. There are many alligators in the swamp.

Involve as many of your constituencies as possible in the formulation of the plan and then make it sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing circumstances and situations. A key point that cannot be overemphasized is the need for flexibility. And a key element in planning for flexibility is simplicity, my third observation. In our case, we tended to overcomplicate the planning by attempting to pinpoint the complex variables with which we would be working. In so doing, we overconcentrated on knowns to the exclusion of the many unknowns that, in fact, caused us to alter our plans substantially. In the heady days of the 60's, who would have foreseen the cataclysmic social and economic movements that have since shaped our society and our institutions? In master planning, remember Justice Holmes' admonition to "seek simplicity but distrust it."

My final observation in reviewing our own master planning effort, is simply that of having faith in what you're doing. If you set a tone of having an institution that is to be a quality institution, one which you, your students, faculty, trustees, and community can be proud of, chances are that it will come to pass. Your master plan will be fulfilled by virtue of becoming a self-fulfilling prophesy. And this, above all, is what master planning is all about--an institutional road map and itinerary for action to achieve the institution's purpose that is based on the faith that that which is striven for shall be achieved.

To illustrate my remarks about the importance of having faith about your planning, let me tell about the nuns who were also nurses. They were traveling in a car which ran out of gas. They walked down the road and flagged a passing motorist who, because he was in a hurry, only had time to siphon a gallon of gas into the only container the nurse nuns had available from their stranded car--a nursing bedpan. After he left, the nuns walked back to their car and started pouring the gasoline from the bedpan into their gas tank. A nearby hitchhiker did a double-take at viewing the scene, shook his head and said "Now that's what I call faith."

In summary, having made some observations about our master planning endeavor, my general conclusion is that, yes, the master planning was worth the

effort. In retrospect, we made a number of faulty assumptions; we committed both errors of omission and commission; we were too specific in some respects and too vague and global in others; we expected too much and delivered too little. But the alternative to our effort would have been the haphazard, gray, colorless, institution that is a blight on the landscape of the community college movement in America--the institution whose style is reactive to its luxury of allowing chance to shape our institutions. It is our responsibility to shape our master plan so that it, rather than random occurrences and mediocrity, will shape our institutions.

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